

RI State Conservation Committee
17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828
(401) 949-1480

MEETING MINUTES

June 29, 2005

9:15 AM

NRCS Conference Room

Eric called the meeting to order at 9:25 am.

In attendance were:

Members – Harriet Powell-SRICD; Eric Offenbergs-Governor's Appointee; Gregg Cassidy-DEM Representative and Paul Dolan-NRICD.

Advisors – Eugene Pepper-DEM/Div of Ag; Kevin Nelson-Statewide Planning and Eric Scherer-NRCS.

Paul Boisvert-Johnson & Wales Univ Marketing Dept; Alicia Lehrer-SRICD; Tom Sandham-ERICD and Wendy Hoyle-NRICD.

I. Minutes

Motion was made to accept the April 6th meeting minutes with the following correction under Reports, section b-Correct the spelling for 'Statewide Planning'. Harriet/Paul Vote-Unanimous

II. Financial Report

The financial report was distributed showing expenses for FY 04-05, including proposed expenses for the remaining year.

We discussed contacting the State regarding insurance for board members. We will review previous correspondence with DEM regarding coverage and also contact Mike Sullivan.

Motion was made to accept the financial report. Harriet/Paul Vote-Unanimous

III. Reports

A. Districts

NRICD

-Jean Lynch wrote to the State Conservation Committee requesting assistance since their rent is increasing this year. The Committee discussed options for the district to gain assistance with the rent. It was suggested that Northern District

contact the Cooperative Extension about renting space for a

satellite

office. Alicia also commented that the Southern Districts' rent should be

decreasing in September and they might be able adjust monies from their

rent allotment. The Southern District has received a line of credit from

Washington Trust and it was suggested that the Northern District could

also look into this with the same bank that Southern received their credit.

The Committee discussed assisting the district for a couple of months rent

if it is an emergency.

Motion was to assist the Northern District with their rent, not to exceed a

total of \$800 and only in an extreme emergency. Harriet/Gregg

Vote-Unanimous

-The Rain Garden Project has gone very well, with one garden planted at

the Woonsocket High School and the other at Verrier School in

Pawtucket.

-The Ad Campaign is completed and was well received. We have received

a large amount of hits on the website since the campaign was started.

-The district had a Water Festival at Providence Water treatment plant for

Drinking Water Day. The students had a great time while learning about

protecting and conserving their water. There is talk about packaging the

Water Festival and loaning this out to water supply boards and schools.

-The District has entered a contract with Kate to work on publishing

reports, newsletters and bulletins for the Scituate Education Program.

ERICD

-Grasslands Conservation Initiative is going very well. Tom is working

with Heather Froberg from URI identifying plants and their diseases in the

Eastern District. The University of Maine is working on tissue culture

samples to identify nutrients that would assist in increasing hay

production.

-The district has met with the Dept of Health and DEM on

marketing

meat in RI. They will be developing the rules and regulations needed and

present these to the farmers. Some are ready to have meat in the market

within the next 2 weeks. In early Fall, NE Beef will put on an all day

demonstration to farmers. The food bank has offered to let them use their

kitchen for the demonstration site. The district has received funds from

RDC to work on this project and Danielle Minto is doing research on

processing and marketing.

-Glen Farm in the Town of Portsmouth will be the site for a proto-type for

open space land on how to make use of the land for wildlife.

-Tom has met with Newport Water on developing an education program.

-The district is working on identifying services provided by the district to

area towns.

-They are working with Pardon Gray, NRCS and Tiverton Land Trust on

a 20-acre parcel to plant warm season grasses.

SRICD

-The Southern District reported that they received a \$20,000 line of credit

from Washington Trust. The bank asked that the districts have an IRS

status. The districts can get a ruling on this if they contact the attorney

general. It was suggested that the Eastern District check past records

for this information. An IRS status has been looked into in the past.

Tom will check with his board regarding this.

-Alicia has been laid-off since May 15th and Susan will be laid-off as of

Monday. The district has applied for 3 grants and will not know the

if they have received any of them until August.

-They are working on an engineering project at Sand Hill Cove concerning

flooding problems from the sewage pumping station.

-There will be a meeting on June 23rd concerning a breech dam on Saw Mill

Pond in Davisville. They will discuss what citizens would like done on

done on the pond and will meet again July 14th to present a layout of these

options.

-Greenwich Bay stormwater treatment system draft plans are 75%

completed. There will be a public meeting July 13th.

-The Alternative Lawn Care presentation in Narragansett went very well

with approximately 20 in attendance.

-Chris is working with NRCS on the Conservation System Guide, which

shows the number of acres that the programs are being implemented.

-The district is working with the Town of Narragansett on a site plan

review project. The district is trying to put together a training session

for town staff and building inspectors. The Committee discussed whether

the districts could do the ERT's instead of RC&D and the need to reach

out to towns.

-Watershed Education has been taught in the 1st and 3rd grades at the

Narragansett Elementary School. The students built watershed models

and located their homes on GIS watershed maps. The district would like

to see this expand to other schools.

It was decided that Paul Boisvert would be moved up in the Agenda due to time constraint.

Marketing Strategy

-Paul Boisvert

Paul teaches marketing at Johnson and Wales University. He described the possibility of his students working on a marketing plan for the State Committee.

His 1st semester class is for 11 weeks and has 35-40 students. Paul suggested that he divide his class into 3 teams and they work with each district. Students will be responsible to print reports.

Motion was made to endorse the marketing strategy presented by Paul Boisvert using the Johnson and Wales University students. Harriet/Paul – Vote-Unanimous

III. Reports (cont'd)

b. Advisors

NRCS

-Eric reported that Judy is transferring to Vermont the end of August.

She is on a detail now in Washington, DC and will be assigned to

Vermont in September. The vacancy was announced last Friday.

-All programs have been ranked; EQIP was allocated so much money, that

they were unable to allocate all the money and need to return excess.

-Rhode Island is one of a few states to be selected to pilot a conservation

application plan project.

-RC&D will be advertising for a new coordinator for next fiscal year.

DEM

-Gregg announced that Mike Sullivan has been confirmed as director

of DEM. The committee discussed setting up a meeting with the

director. Gregg will speak to Scott about this and the Committee will

follow up by scheduling a meeting.

DEM/Div of Ag

-Eugene reported that the Division of Ag is working with the Northern

District on installing irrigation pipes at Curran Park.

-Road salt is showing up in wells in the northern area of the state and

wiping out the crop in these areas. There are 4 wells heavily contaminated with salt burn.

-There has been severe damage in the area done by deer.

-The trizene levels in Aquidneck Island area have been reduced after the

Eastern district held their workshop on pesticide use.

Statewide Planning

The draft of the Rules and Regulations for the Agland Preservation

Commission is not ready yet. Kevin will have the finished draft sent to

the Committee for review. They plan on having the public hearing next month.

IV. Old Business

a. Agland Preservation Project

The subcommittee met in May. They obtained a map from DEM to

review the most updated information on farms in RI;
indicating that

Aquidneck Island is most at risk. Interns for DEM will be
updating
maps. The State Committee discussed criteria for ranking
farms.

The ranking system includes soil quality and other natural
resource
factors. The Committee would like to include diversity in
farmland

as part of the ranking system. One of the purposes of the
subcommittee

is to create a comprehensive map to be used by all agencies.
FSA is

having an intern work on maps; Eugene will check with FSA
to review

what information they are including on their maps. DEM's
map is
available on their website.

b. Separation of Powers

The Separation of Powers bill has not been voted on and will
not pass

as currently written. The Committee will check with Peter
about having

additional appointments from DEM in the interim.

V. Other

**The next State Committee meeting is Wednesday, August 3rd
at 9:15 AM
in the Southern District's conference room.**

Motion to adjourn at 11:40 Harriet/Gregg Unanimous